the Government. It is being operationalized throughout the country, with special focus on 18 States which include 8 Empowered Action Group States (Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Orissa and Rajasthan), 8 NE States, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The main aim of NRHM : is to provide accessible, affordable, accountable, effective and reliable primary health care facilities, especially, to the poor and vulnerable sections of the population. NRHM seeks to strengthen the Public Health delivery system at all levels.

The Sub-centres and PHCs are proposed to be revitalized through better human resource management, clear quality standards, better community supported untied fund to enable local planning and action. The Indian Public Health Standards define structural, personnel, equipment and management standards and have been finalised for District Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs and SCs. All the States are undertaking facility surveys to identify the fund requirements for upgrading the facilities and provision of adequate funds has been made in this regard. Till July, 2007, States have identified 2783 CHCs for upgradation to IPHS and facility surveys have been completed in 2079 CHCs. These CHCs would be upgraded to the status of FRUs before eventual upgradation to IPHS.

All the facilities are also being provided untied funds to enable the local management committee to carry out locally relevant initiatives for better service delivery. At the level of Sub Centre, untied funds are to be operated in the Joint account of ANM and the Gram Pradhan. The Hospital Management Committees (Rogi Kalyan Samitis) at various levels are being set up as registered societies with the representation of Panchayati Raj Institutions. These societies are also being given funding support under the NRHM to allow local action.

Resentment among farmers for low sugarcane price

†*280. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment of the production of sugarcane this year has been made;

(b) whether it is a fact that huge quantity of sugarcane crop has been burnt by the farmers because of not getting payment for sugarcane from sugar mills and also not getting proper price for sugarcane; and

(c) if so, the efforts being made by Government to check its recurrence?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per the 4th advance estimates released on 19.07.2007, production of sugarcane in the country during 2006-07 is estimated at 345.31 million tonnes.

(b) and (c) No report has been received by the Central Government from any sugarcane producing State so far regarding burning of the sugarcane crop by the farmers. An amount of Rs.4,429.93 crore was due to be paid to the sugarcane farmers as on 30th June, 2007 as cane price arrears of 2006-07 and earlier sugar seasons. The Central Government has taken the following steps:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(i) A buffer stock of 50 lakh tonnes has been created involving a subsidy amount of about Rs.945 crore for a period of one year. Banks would also provide additional credit of about Rs.1050 crore to the sugar mills.

(ii) Export assistance to defray expenditure on internal transport, marketing and handling charges and ocean freight assistance for sugar factories subject to actuals for export by road/rail to neighbouring countries have been announced for a period of one year with effect from 19th April, 2007.

(iii) Ban on export of sugar was removed in January, 2007 and requirement of obtaining an export release order for export of sugar except for exports to European Union countries and United States of America has been dispensed with from 31.07.2007 for the current and next sugar season.

The buffer subsidy amount and the additional credit are to be exclusively used for liquidation of cane price arrears of sugarcane farmers. Further, Realizations through exports are also expected to enable the mills to clear the cane arrears.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Farmers' Indebtedness

1984. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether indebtedness of farmers is increasing day by day and in some States it has reached up to 60 per cent;

(b) if so, what are the figures of farmers' indebtedness, State-wise;

(c) whether Government would provide package to indebted farmers throughout the country particularly to the farmers of Uttar Pradesh who are waiting for their dues to be cleared by the sugar factories; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details are given in Statement (*See* below).

(c) There is no scheme under consideration of Government of India to provide package to individual farmers whose dues are yet to be cleared by sugar factories.

(d) To look into the problems of agricultural indebtedness in totality and suggest measures for providing relief to farmers across the country, Government of India constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. R. Radhakrishna, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR). The Expert Group has submitted its report and Government is processing its recommendations.